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New York, November 30.—A conference to discuss the widespread campaign of secret anti-Jewish propaganda in the United States was called by the American Jewish Committee. This conference was participated in by the foremost national Jewish organizations and authorized the issuance of a public statement in which the so-called "Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion" now being circulated in large numbers by secret agencies are condemned as a forgery, and the charge that Bolshevism is part of a conspiracy by Jews and Freemasons to secure world domination is denounced as a malicious invention inspired by foreign reactionary forces for the purpose of breeding suspicion and hatred by the Jews and Freemasons in the United States in order to discredit "free government in the eyes of the European masses and thus facilitate the restoration of absolutism in government."

The signatures of the declaration which is addressed "To Our Fellow Citizens" include the following representative Jewish Organizations: The American Jewish Committee, the Zionist Organization of America, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, the United Synagogue of America, the Provisional Committee of an American Jewish Congress, the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Rabbinical Assembly of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the United Orthodox Jewish Rabbis of America. The complete address follows:  
To Our Fellow-Citizens:

During the war, by secret agencies, a document variously called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," "The Protocols of the Meetings of the Zionist Men of Wisdom," and "The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion," was clandestinely circulated, in typewritten form, among public officials and carefully selected civilians, for the purpose of giving rise to the belief that the Jews, in conjunction with Freemasons, had been for centuries engaged in a conspiracy to produce revolution and anarchy, by means of which they hoped to attain the control of the world by the establishment of some sort of despotic rule. Some months ago this document was published in England. More recently it has appeared in print in the United States and thousands of copies have been circulated with an air of mystery among legislators, journalists, clergymen and teachers, members of clubs, and indiscriminately to the general public. The London Morning Post has given out a series of articles as a commentary upon The Protocols, in which the charge of an unholy con-

## A Public Statement by the American Jewish Committee

spiracy between Jews and Freemasons, or with any other body, for is elaborated, and Bolshevism is characterized as a movement of, for and by the Jews and is declared to be a fulfilment of The Protocols. These articles, whose authorship is not disclosed, have now appeared in book form under the title "The Cause of World Unrest." During the past six months there have been sent forth weekly in Henry Ford's organ, The Dearborn Independent, attacks of extraordinary virulence upon the Jews. These assaults upon the honor of the Jewish people are all founded on The Protocols and on the discredited literature of Russian and German anti-Semitism, inspired by the minions of autocracy. Parrot-like they repeat the abominable charges that can only appeal to the credulity of a stunted intelligence—charges long since conceded to be unfounded by all fair-minded men. Ford is employing his great wealth in scattering broadcast his fulminations, regardless of consequences.

When the Jews of the United States first learned of these malevolent prints, they deemed it beneath their dignity to take notice of them, because they regarded them as a mere recrudescence of mediaeval bigotry and stupidity showing upon their face their utter worthlessness. These publications have, however, been put in circulation to such an extent that it is believed that the time has come, humiliating thought it be to them, for the Jews to make answer to these libels and to the unworthy insinuations and innuendoes that have been whispered against them.

Speaking as representatives of the Jewish people, familiar with the history of Judaism in its various phases and the movements, past and present, in Jewish life, we say with all solemnity:

1. The Protocols are a base forgery. There has never been an organization of Jews known as The Elders of Zion, or The Zionist Men of Wisdom, or The Wise Men of Zion, or bearing any other similar name. There has never existed a secret or other Jewish body organized for any purpose such as that implied in The Protocols. The Jewish people have never dreamed of a Jewish dictatorship, of a destruction of religion, of an interference with industrial prosperity, or of an overthrow of civilization. The Jews have never conspired with the Free-

masons, or with any other body, for any purpose.

From the time of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by Titus, the Jews have had no political state. For centuries they were forced to wander from land to land, and to flee for refuge wherever they might find it against bitter persecution. They were pent up in ghettos, were deprived of even the shadow of civil or political rights, and were made the objects of every possible form of discrimination. It is a little more than fifty years since the Jews of Western Europe became politically emancipated. Until the outbreak of the World War the Jews of Eastern Europe, constituting a majority of all the Jews in the world, were not even permitted to exercise the rights of citizenship in lands where they and their ancestors had dwelt for generations. The great mass of the Jews were hampered in every way in their efforts to earn a livelihood. Far from desiring to govern the world, they were content with the opportunity to live. Numerically they constitute less than one per cent of the population of the earth; and more than one-half of them are on the verge of starvation. The suggestion that, in their feebleness, they have been planning in secret conclave to seize absolute power and to dominate the 99 per cent of non-Jews upon the globe, is a ridiculous invention than which even the madness can conjure nothing more preposterous.

Where is the habitat of these so-called Elders of Zion, by whatever name they may be called? Who are these hidden sages? Whence do they come? What is the nature of their organization? The distributors of The Protocols are silent on that subject. Whence came these pretended Protocols? One Serge Nilus, of whose identity little is known, a Russian mystic and an ardent supporter of Czarism, claims to have received them in Russia, in 1901, in manuscript form, from a Russian officeholder, who stated that the manuscript had been originally obtained by a lady, whose name is not given, and who, he said, obtained them in a mysterious way. In what language they were written is not stated. Where that manuscript now is does not appear. Nilus asserts that he submitted the Protocols to one of the Russian Grand Dukes, who, after examination, returned them with the de-

spairing message: "Too late." Apparently there was no room for them in the Russian archives, and they suggested no task for the Czar's ubiquitous police to perform. In 1905, Nilus published at Tsarskoje Selo a second edition of a mystical book entitled "The Great in the Little," the first edition having been published in 1901. Into this later edition he incorporated for the first time The Protocols, which he claimed to have had in his possession for four years. In January, 1917, he published another book under the title, "It Is Near, at the Door," purporting to foretell "the coming of the Anti-Christ and the Kingdom of the Devil on Earth." In this book he announces that he had only then learned authoritatively from Jewish sources (what they were is not explained) that these Protocols were nothing other than a strategic plan for the conquest of the world, of putting it under the yoke of Israel, "the struggler-against-God," a plan worked out by the leaders of the Jewish people during the many centuries of their dispersion, and finally presented to the Council of Elders by the Prince of Exile, Theodor Herzl, at the time of the first Zionist Congress summoned by him at Basle in August, 1897. He declared that the Protocols were signed by the Zionist representatives of the thirty-third degree of initiation; that they were secretly removed from the complete file of Protocols that pertained to the first Zionist Congress; that they were taken from the secret vaults at the main Zionist office, which, it is said, "at present is located in French territory."

The Protocols as published bear no signatures. The identity of the Zionist representatives by whom they are claimed to have been signed is left untold. The location of the main Zionist office and of the secret vaults from which The Protocols were secretly removed remains a secret. It is, however, a matter of history that the first Zionist Congress was publicly held by Jews who came from various parts of Europe for the purpose of considering the misery of their brethren in Eastern Europe and of enabling them to find shelter in the Holy Land. Theodor Herzl was a distinguished journalist, a man of true nobility of character. He presided at the Congress, all of whose deliberations were held in the light of day. The insinuation that there was a thirty-third, or any other, degree of initiation in this organization is merely a malicious effort to bring the Jews into parallelism with the Freemasons and thus subject them to all the fanciful and fantastic

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